

Message Text

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AMCNSUL STRASBOURG

UNCLAS EC BRUSSELS 4423

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR ETRD EEC

SUBJECT: EC COMMISSIONER AND MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

ATTACK ARAB LEAGUE BOYCOTT OF COMMUNITY NATIONALS AND
FIRMS

REF: A) EC BRUSSELS 3631

B) EC BRUSSELS 4202

1. SUMMARY: ON MAY 15, IN RESPONSE TO A SOCIALIST GROUP QUESTION IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST EC NATIONS AND FIRMS, EC COMMISSIONER CHEYSSON SAID THAT SUCH DISCRIMINATION IS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION THE COMMUNITY SEEKS WITH ARAB COUNTRIES. CHEYSSON SAID THAT TRADE EXPANSION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF EC AGREEMENTS WITH SEVERAL ARAB COUNTRIES IS CLEARLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH ANY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION. SEVERAL PARLIAMENTARIANS STRONGLY CRITICIZED THE ARAB LEAGUE BOYCOTT AND PRAISED CHEYSSON FOR HIS FORTHRIGHT STATEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. A DISCUSSION OF THE ARAB LEAGUE'S BLACKLISTING OF EUROPEAN FIRMS AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST COMMUNITY NATIONALS WAS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MAY 11-15 EUROPEAN
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PARLIAMENT SESSION IN STRASBOURG. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION

PUT BY THE SOCIALIST GROUP, CHEYSSON, COMMISSIONER FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION, DECLARED THAT SUCH DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES WERE INCOMPATIBLE WITH COMMUNITY PRINCIPLES AND CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION WHICH THE COMMUNITY SEEKS WITH ARAB COUNTRIES. CHEYSSON STRESSED THAT IT WAS THE COMMUNITY'S POLICY NOT TO TOLERATE ANY BOYCOTT OR DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE IN EC AGREEMENTS WITH THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED.

3. CHEYSSON SAID THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF NONDISCRIMINATION IS LAID DOWN IN COMMUNITY TRADE AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED WITH LEBANON AND EGYPT AND ALSO FIGURES, IN THE FORM OF SPECIAL CLAUSES, IN AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED WITH ISRAEL AND THE ACP COUNTRIES. HE ADDED THAT IN CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH ALGERIA, MOROCCO AND TUNISIA THIS MATTER IS BEING INTENSELY DISCUSSED. (SEE REF A). THE COMMISSION RATES THE QUESTION OF NONDISCRIMINATION AS ONE OF ITS PRINCIPAL CONCERNS, AND HAS RECEIVED STRICT INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN THIS RESPECT. HE ALSO DECLARED THAT TRADE EXPANSION IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH ANY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION.

4. AFTER SEVERAL PARLIAMENTARIANS JOINED THE DEBATE WITH STRONG ATTACKS ON THE ARAB LEAGUE'S POSITION ON THIS MATTER, CHEYSSON REITERATED THE COMMISSION'S POSITION AND CALLED UPON ALL COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS, AS WELL AS COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS IN THE EC COUNTRIES, TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST BOYCOTTS AND DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES. AT THIS POINT HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE ARAB COUNTRIES WERE NOT THE ONLY COUNTRIES TO ENGAGE IN SUCH PRACTICES. CHEYSSON SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE "DID NOT WANT TO ACCUSE ANYONE," THE AMERICAN EMBARGO OF CUBA AND US EFFORTS TO GET OTHERS TO SUPPORT IT ARE WELL-KNOWN EXAMPLES.

5. DURING THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON THE EC-ISRAEL TRADE AGREEMENT, CHEYSSON AND EC COUNCIL PRESIDENT FITZGERALD DEFENDED THE AGREEMENT AS REPRESENTING A BALANCED APPROACH BY THE COMMUNITY IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN AREA. THEY EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT AGREEMENTS WITH THE OTHER MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES WILL SOON BE CONCLUDED IN THE SAME CONTEXT. CHEYSSON DENIED THAT

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ARAB COUNTRIES HAD "PROTESTED" THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL BUT HE DID INDICATE THAT THREE ARAB COUNTRIES HAD REQUESTED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT.
(REF B.) GREENWALD

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